

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ADP-00 CU-04 L-03 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15

RSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-12

PRS-01 OMB-01 EB-11 RSR-01 AID-20 NIC-01 GAC-01 /139 W
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R 091600 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7841

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: CONGRESS OF DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION CONCLUDES 5- DAY
CONGRESS

REF: LISBON 1220

1. SUMMARY: OPPOSITION CONGRESS ENDED FIVE DAYS SESSION
WITH SHARP CONFRONTATION WITH POLICE. 1500 PARTICIPANTS
STRESSED CALL FOR AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS, PARTI-
CIPATION IN AUTMNM ELECTIONS AND OPPOSITION TO PORTUGAL' S
AFRICAN WARS.

2. OPPOSITIONIST CONGRESS IN AVEIRO CONCLUDED APRIL 8.
EIGHT COMPONENT WORKING GROUPS MET APRIL 5-7 IN THEATER;
MEETINGS GENERALLY QUIET, WELL ORGANIZED AND WITHOUT POLICE
INTERVENTION. ATMOSPHERE CHANGED MARKEDLY APRIL 7. IN
OPPOSITION TO CIVIL GOVERNOR' S PROHIBITION OF MASS
MEETING AT AVEIRO TOMB OF FORMER OPPOSITION LEADER (REFTEL) ,
HUNDREDS AND POSSIBLY THOUSANDS STREAMED FROM LISBON
AND OTHER AREAS TOWARD AVEIRO APRIL 7. TRAINS AND
BUSSES WERE STOPPED BY POLICE, AND ROAD BLOCKS
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ESTABLISHED ON ENTRANCES TO TOWN.

3. MID- MORNING APRIL 8 SAW 2,000 PREDOMINANTLY YOUTHFUL OPPOSITION DEMONSTRATORS IN MIDDLE OF AVEIRO TOWN CONFRONTED BY OVER 400 RIOT POLICE WITH HELMETS , SHIELDS AND DOGS. CROWD CHANTED SLOGANS AGAINST POLICE AND AFRICAN WARS. POLICE MOVED IN, DISPERSED CROWD ROUGHLY; REPORTEDLY 70 INJURED (INCLUDING SEVERAL PROMINENT OPPOSITIONISTS) AND 30 REQUIRED MEDICAL ATTENTION. POLICE THEN CLOSED PARK AT WHICH CONGRESS HAD SCHEDULED AFTERNOON PICNIC AND FORBADE FURTHER OUTDOOR PUBLIC MEETINGS.

4. FOUR- HOUR CLOSED SESSION APRIL 9 ATTENDED BY 3000- 3500 HIGHLIGHTED FOLLOWING THEMES: (A) AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS, EMPHASIZED THROUGHOUT FIVE- DAY MEETINGS. (B) PARTICIPATION IN AUTUMN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS (BY PUBLIC DISCUSSION BUT NOT NECESSARILY BY RUNNING OPPOSITION CANDIDATES). (C) SOLIDARITY OF STUDENTS AND WORKERS. (D) OPPOSITION TO PORTUGAL' S CONTINUING WARS IN AFRICA.

5. COMMENT: PRESS CENSORS HAVE PERMITTED WIDE COVERAGE OF CONGRESS, A FACT WHICH LEADS MANY OBSERVERS TO CONCLUDE GOP SEES CONGRESS AS OF NEGLIGIBLE IMPORTANCE, AND CERTAINLY NO REAL THREAT. FOR THIS REASON AND ALSO TO ESTABLISH CREDENTIALS AS DEDICATED OPPONENTS OF REGIME, PARTICIPANTS MAY HAVE SOUGHT VIOLENT CONFRONTATION WITH AUTHORITIES. EMBOFF WHO PRESENT REPORTS SOME FOREIGN JOURNALISTS ROUGHED UP, AND WE UNDERSTAND SPAIN- PORTUGAL NY TIMES BUREAU CHIEF AND 10 OTHERS SIGNING PROTEST TO GOP RE POLICE ACTION. DETAILS AND ANALYSIS BY AIRGRAM.
POST

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 APR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LISBON01271
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730437/aaaahygj.tel
Line Count: 102
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 LISBON 1220
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20-Sep-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <27-Nov-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971212
Subject: CONGRESS OF DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION CONCLUDES 5- DAY CONGRESS
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LOURENCO MARQUES
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SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005